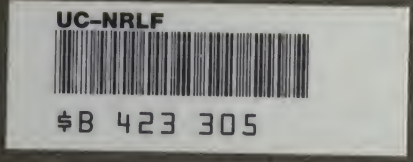
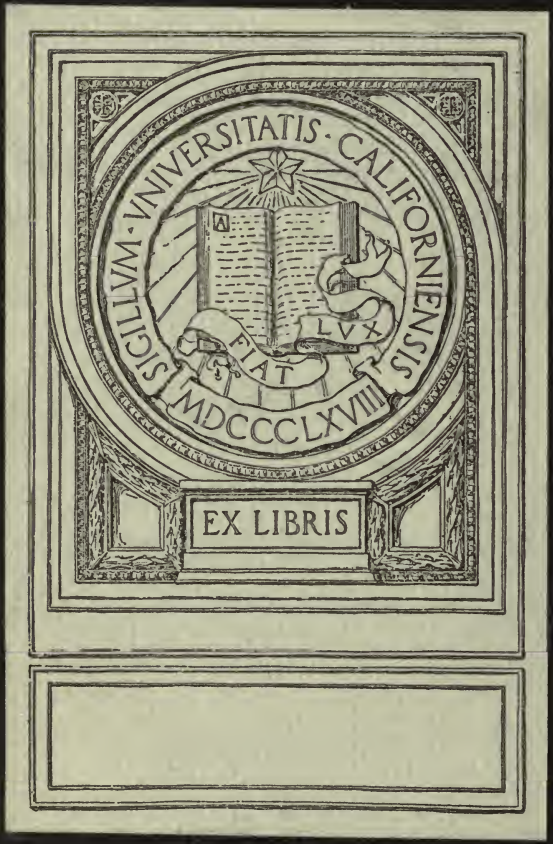
D F
951
K6V4




SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Publication No. 2

Traveling Notes On

Corytsa

by

T. Vellianites

Economist, Historian

Deputy to the Greek Parliament

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Translated by

NICHOLAS CULOLIAS, LL. B.

Published by the Pan-Epirotic
Union of America
7 Water St., Boston, Mass.

Printed by the
PURITAN LINOTYPE
Cambridge, Mass.

http://www.archive.org/details/travelingnoteson00vellrich

CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA

(Traveling Notes)

CORYTSA

by

T. VELLIANITES

Translated by

NICHOLAS CULOLIAS, LL. B.

IF951
K6V4

PREFACE

"Associated with the history and the destinies of Greece, as far back as we can trace the distant antiquity, Epirus has remained through the centuries the hearth of Greek culture and Greek traditions. It suffices, in order to mark the deep Hellenic character of this province, to recall that it has been one of the holy lands of ancient Greece, and that she harbored in her mountains, at a small distance from the modern city of Jannina, at Dodona, the oracle of Zeus himself. (Charles Vellay, L'irredentisme hellenique p. 13).

"To the German traveller Weigand, who urged certain villages to give up the Greek schools, the Greek churches, and the Greek language and to adopt Albanian such, the villagers replied with resentment, 'Albania for us is synonymous with savagery; our fatherland is Epirus; and our ancestor Pyrrhus, the Greek King; as for the language, we prefer to pass on to our children an instrument perfected by our learned Greek ancestors, rather than hand to them a barbarian instrument. We are daily trying to draw nearer to light, to civilization, to Hellenism.' "

(Victor Berard, La Turquie et l'hellenisme contemporain, Ed. 2nd, p. 49).

"It is true only Italy and Greece quarrel on the question of Epirus.

"If we wish to form a good opinion of the state of mind of the diplomats of Italy, we should consult the ethnographic maps of Southern Albania, such as are circulated in Italy. Everything is falsified at will. The district of Korytsa where more than one-half the population is Greek, is indicated in these Italian maps as exclusively Albanian; the districts of Jannina and Delvinon, where the Greeks represent eighty per cent. of the total population there, are indicated in these maps as Albanian districts with here and there a few thin groups of Greeks." (George Clemenceau, L'homme libre, May 15, 1913.)

These testimonies to the hellenic character of Epirus will help the reader of this excellent treatise of Mr. Vellianites to grasp the Epirotic difficulties the easier. Korytsa is Greek in the opinion of all those who have lived long enough among its people to have been able to feel their intense attachment to Greece. The reading of Mr. Vellianites' "Traveling Notes on Korytsa," besides being very delightful, is very convincing that Korytsa has always been a centre of Greek culture, and has continued through the centuries to remain hellenic in sentiment, in civilization, in culture, and in aspirations.

N. J. CASSAVETES,
Director of the
Pan-Epirotic Union of America.

7 Water St., Boston, Mass.
January, 1919.

CORYTSA.

I.

The Italian General Ferero was kind enough to assign an automobile for me and to place at my disposal a most courteous first lieutenant that I might more easily travel the road from Jannina to Corytsa.

These measures were necessary to avoid loss of time in having my passports examined at the different military posts. At Kalipaki, where there is the first Italian post from Jannina, I was received with much courtesy by the Italian officers with whom I had passed the previous day in friendly intercourse.

We, Ionian Islanders, converse freely with the Italians; we understand their language very well, and have delved considerably in their literature. The dominion of Venice of four hundred years or more over the Ionian Islands has left something of the life, of the civilization, and of the language of Venetians in the cities. Outside the walls of the cities, however, the Venetian atmosphere left untouched the Greek population, which remained pure and uncorrupted, as it was in ancient times. In these islands there were no incursions of foreign peoples, no crossings of other races; consequently, the ancient Greek character remained pure in the

Ionian Islands, and the ancient Greek blood unmixed. We, the older inhabitants of the cities of the Ionian Islands, still converse with the Italians in their own tongue, while the new generation is entirely ignorant of the Italian language. The Italian First Lieutenant assigned as my companion, was a Venetian, and spoke the Venetian dialect, which I myself can use with some facility, and thus immediate friendly relations were established between us.

With much willingness the officers who were my hosts led me through the bivouacs of that small military camp. I admired also the reposeful manner shown by the Italian soldier at mess time. Afterwards we followed the road that passes through the wild and woody mountains of Epirus. The view was indescribable. The brightness of the sky and the clarity of the atmosphere was such that from a great distance could be distinguished the beautiful delineations of the mountain peaks, behind which one could imagine the Ionian seas.

Stream-ploughed valleys could be seen from the loftiness of the road. Crystal waters were flowing down from the rocks, and birds, undisturbed by the constant roaring of the guns at the distant front, but distinctly heard by us, were singing in the thick-foliaged trees. They, too, had become accustomed to the atmosphere of war. The landscape was so rich and various in its beauty that it seemed to our bewildered eyes like the unfolding of a moving picture of charming scenery not easily found in other lands.

Lofty mountains with abrupt precipices and idyllic valleys abounding with flocks of sheep, succeeded each other. These could serve as scenery for the idyls of Moschos and Theocritos. Usually, however, the abrupt and the precipitous appeared as nature's great epic and inspired in our souls awe and fear. We beheld wondrous phenomena of nature.

Those proudly rising mountains were the mountains of Souli, that heroic little democracy, which in the midst of the autocracy, despotism and tyranny of Ali-Pasha, maintained its independence, fighting constantly and never submitting to the force of brutality. Those other mountains were the Acrokezavnia and beyond, immortal Pindus. Hero-breeding mountains these, the impregnable abodes of those indomitable fighters, who, fleeing the valleys where the conqueror ruled, were there preparing the future liberation of Greece. Those heroes did never compromise with the new regime. They always maintained their independence in the mountains and whenever any one of them fell or was seized and his bones crushed by the executioner Ali-Pasha, nature mourned the loss of the hero, as if some Homeric God disappeared from the mountains. Our popular muse is full of such threnology.

"Kleane ta dendra klaene; klaene ta vouna; klaene ta korphoovunia pou limeriaze; klaene kae e vrysoules me to kryo nero."

And truly, such lamenting of eternal nature was appropriate to the death of such heroes, who from the day the last Greek emperor fell before the Gate of Romanos, they took to the mountains and by fighting for centuries the Sultans, protested before the civilized world against force and arbitrariness which destroyed a civilization of so many centuries.

Every mountain peak, every crystal fountain, every tree of those mountains tells a story and a legend about the indomitable Klephts. During our passage thither were reviving in my memory the stories, traditions, and legends with which the life of that Greek land is woven. The charming imaginative creations of the ancient muse and the personalities of the great heroes of Modern Hellenism, whose memory remains indelible in our minds, pressed themselves upon my consciousness and enlivened that mountain world.

II.

It was indeed there that the first roarings of the guns against tyranny were heard. From the depths of those forests sprang up the immortal folk songs which are the beginning of our modern poetry. Over those rough and rugged roads, climbed only by wild goats, traveled for centuries inspired monks who brought the National Oracles of Agathangelos and heralded the Resurrection of the enslaved Greek race. When the revolution broke out, which for ten years shook from its very

foundations the then vast Ottoman Empire, it was from those mountains that the leaders came who guided the peasants of Peloponesos and Central Greece to victory, to glory and to liberty. Over the road they used to go with ease, six years ago the Greek troops went, bringing victory and declaring equality among the peoples who for five centuries had been deprived even of the idea of good government.

These thoughts I was communicating to my companion who was ignorant of the heroic epic poetry in which this land abounds. My companion seemed surprised and was listening at length to the singing of that inexhaustible poetic fountain. He was well conscious of my being deeply moved at the view of that magnificent scenery, where one of the most beautiful periods of the Greek history has been acted, or rather the epic life of the Klephts which is sung today and will be sung to the end of time by the slender shepherdesses and the agile shepherds of the hills from whom are drawn our bravest regiments, the light girdled troops, which did wonders during our recent wars.

With such impressions we reached Leskoviki, from which we went to Erseka. Thence, until we entered the valley of Korytsa, the scenery was monotonous and melancholy. There are no woods, no rivers, and no charming scenes. Everywhere there are barren hills and mountains and along the whole distance women and children, many of whom were barely seven years old, were crushing stones for the maintenance of the military road. This

toilsome labor impressed one with the struggle for existence which these children of Epirus begin so prematurely. All these children spoke Greek. I asked them whether they were going to school. They answered me with some bitterness that when the Greek administration withdrew, their teachers left with it, and that on this account their schools were closed. Their priests, however, had remained, and the church gathers around her these small children, whose ordinary course of life has been disturbed by the war.

Finally, we entered a well cultivated plain surrounded by the mountains of Osiaza, which branch off from the Illizian Tomaros and join Gora on the north. On the north also rise the mountains of Xerovounion and Livaniscos, which are scions of Galitsista. These mountains serve as a blue frame to the verdant plain which appeared before us in all its beauty. It smiled with that emerald sprightliness bestowed by nature on the northern sections of Greece, which are unvisited by the dog days and but slightly touched by the destructive breezes of Sirocco. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we were entering the plain. And yet, at that altitude, we did not feel the slightest discomfort of the burning heat. A little while before, a benevolent shower had purified the atmosphere and refreshing breezes came down from the mountains. This plain has a longitude of sixty kilometers and a latitude of twenty; it touches on its northeastern side the town of Viglista, where a gate is formed between Morava and Swesda facing towards the

valley of Aleacmon; this valley stretches from the west towards the east and is divided by the river Decolis, the Eordaicus of the ancients. Besides this river, other smaller streams irrigate the plain of Corytsa, among which is Moravas flowing through the city, and Donnavestis, a short distance from it.

From a height of about one hundred meters we see the entire plain spread out like an immense Oriental rug wth its long river fibrils; at a distance of a few kilometers beyond, the great Lake Soviane, which I visited the following day, reflected the light of the sun most brilliantly.

As far as I know, the lake is not mentioned by the ancient writers, Greek or Roman. I guess from this that it was formed by Eordaicus later, and not far in the distant past, through the gradual formation of a cruse for storing part of its waters. This, one might guess also from the thickets which are to be seen above the surface of the water. In this wonderful plain rises Corytsa. We entered through the broad avenue on which the best of her institutions are erected. This avenue gives to the city an entirely European and modern aspect. It has nothing that reminds one of the cities of Epirus and of Macedonia. The strongest impression is created by the Greek Church of St. George, a newly constructed and large church, built on the cite of an old chaplet by George Docos at whose expense there was erected also one of the schools of Corytsa for girls. This neighborhood is called Genimachalas, i. e., new neighborhood. A short

while ago the Austrian aeroplanes came down upon this neighborhood, and the church suffered considerable damage. One of the bombs pierced the dome of the church and fell inside. Fortunately, at that hour the Christians were not attending mass, so that only the icon of the Almighty and the marble floor suffered from the German brutality. But in the houses round about many were the victims from the explosion. Especially women and children which at that hour, care free and happy, were playing in the streets. Corytsa is not a fortified city, but the German barbarity makes no distinctions, and drops its murderous materials for no military reason, but simply for the purpose of effecting evil.

The city, nevertheless, in spite of the recent sad event, had not lost its usual appearance, and the crowd passed through that beautiful avenue, which creates the first pleasing impression of the civilization and prosperity of its inhabitants.

But it is not this avenue alone that gives the impression of sprightliness and prosperity. Most of the streets are broad, even the tortuous alleys have that characteristic charm possessed by the old cities of Epirus and Macedonia. They preserve the ancient Oriental rhythm in accordance with which the inhabitants built their homes in the depths of the gardens to conceal from the conqueror's view their moral and material superiority that they might not arouse his envy and greed.

III.

In the narrow alleys one can study the life of the people of this city, distinguish even their ancient ways and efforts with which for centuries they were preparing to regain their political independence through the creation of an intellectual superiority. There are to be found still in those little alleys the Turkish calderims which are the scourge of the unaccustomed feet of the inhabitants of the new cities. In the somewhat broader streets, however, there are new houses, and on the edges of the sidewalks rows of thick-leaved trees, whose foliage unites with the gardens of the houses; their towering plants conquer the garden walls and overflow so abundantly that they present an emerald green network similar to the theatrical scenery of the ancient idyls. In the depths of the courtyards which have been transformed into flower gardens by the artistic sense of the women of Corytsa, are to be seen the houses. I visited many of them. The comfort, luxury and abundance of the Oriental rugs, the *menterlkia,* those immense divans by the broad hearth, the silver shyrets made by the Venetians and the Calorytes of Epirus, the ancient gilded crystal articles which come also from Venice, the courteous manners of the ladies, their natural artistic taste in dress, their Greek precision in speech—all these show that one is in the midst of a city which always had an advanced civilization and which has indeed been one of the centres of Greek culture during the years of slavery.

What is also a surprise is the extreme cleanliness of this city. The houses, the hallways, the courtyards, all shine brightly. This cleanliness extends also to the streets and thoroughfares, a phenomenon in this handsome Greek city, truly wonderful. Turkey has not accustomed the East with such phenomena. The sense of civic cleanliness is not at all developed among the Turks, much less among the Albanians. It is an exclusively Greek virtue, inherited from the ancient civilization of the race. Strictly speaking, Corytsa does not belong to Epirus. It belongs much more to Macedonia, or rather to both. It is undoubtedly the cleanest and the most beautiful city of Epirus and Western Macedonia. One can safely say it is the centre which unites Western Macedonia with Epirus. Through it passes the broad thoroughfare which joins these two sections of the Greek state. Without Corytsa their contiguity is interrupted. It is naturally, therefore, impossible to separate Corytsa from these two districts of the Grecian land. But independently of this, 80 per cent of the population of Corytsa is purely Greek. All their interests are inseparably bound together with those of Greek Macedonia and Epirus. If this beautiful city is forcibly separated from them it is bound to suffer inevitable decay and to see its people expatriated seeking to live elsewhere in accordance with their racial conscience and material interests.

History, as far as I know, does not relate in what manner and when Corytsa was founded, as it tells about Ochrida (Lychnidon), Castoria and other

nearby cities. The geographers mention that until 1487 Corytsa was an obscure village called Episcope, numbering about fifteen houses of peasants. At that period the Sultan, Mahomed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, much before the conquest, passed through this country and reached Panarite of Premete; he took with him Elias Bey, a young Ottomanized Macedonian who distinguished himself in many battles and especially during the capture of Constantinople when he took Hypsomatheia, one of the densely inhabited suburbs of the city. In his old age Elias Bey asked of the Sultan Bayiazet IV, the successor of Mohamed, permission to return and die in his own country. Bayiazet as a mark of special favor towards Elias Bey, who bore the title Mirahor-Ebel, i. e., first keeper of the Horse, granted him the usufruct of that country and made him governor with hereditary rights.

Elias Bey returned to his country and established himself at Corytsa. When he died, he turned his lands into Vacouphia or sacra so that they would become inalienable. His descendants until today receive the income from them. Since that time Episcope, the unimportant village, little by little grew into a town and the town into the handsome modern city.

Yet this historical note does not solve the question, for I saw in the code of one of the monasteries of Mt. Athos that some monk from Corytsa was named as its founder way back in 1320. From this it becomes evident that the Corytsa of Mirahor-Elias Bey pre-existed him. In the ancient times

this district was called the land of the Kallekini and was included in the territory of Illirian Eordaea. During the Byzantine times there was issued an imperial golden bull dated 1020, which among other episcopates coming under the jurisdiction of the first autocephalus archbishopric of Justinian, mentions that of Castoria within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of which fell Corytsa under the name of Corestos. As it is well known the autocephalus archbishopric of Ochrida was maintained until 1767 when it was abolished through the efforts of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Samuel III.

To the advancement of Corytsa, contributed, to be sure, the central position she occupied between southwestern Macedonia and southeastern Epirus; but to a great extent it was the result of the energetic and enterprising spirit which distinguishes the Greek race. Until the beginning of the tenth century Corytsa does not show any special progress. She does not have, one might say, a great history, nor does she play an important role, due to the superority of the neighboring city, Moschopolis. She does not appear at all as a commercial centre. But from that period she becomes one of the most important centres of Greek culture, and intellectual activity is transferred from Moschopolis to here. By this I do not mean to say that before that time Corytsa was entirely lacking in cultural life. On the contrary, from the year 1700 the church of Zoodochos Peige had been erected with its peculiar colonnade and its wonderful altar, the work of Epirotic wood carving which developed

and received an altogether artistic character among the Ionian Islanders. People who decorate their city with such works of art could not have been altogether barren of the sense of the beautiful. They must have tasted of the fruit of culture. But from the beginning of the nineteenth century Corytsa takes a foremost position among the Greek cities of Western Macedonia and surpasses even Kozane, which flourished in the eighteenth century, maintaining a lyceum in which one of the greatest teachers of that century, Eugenios Boulgaris from Corfu, taught.

IV.

In Corytsa there is a large section called the "School District." That is the Latin neighborhood of the city. In that neighborhood are the Greek educational institutions. At the apex of the group is the Gymnasium maintained since 1840. It has a library of 200 volumes and some small collections of insects, minerals and native petrifications. It has, also, a physical laboratory and has always operated in accordance with the curricula of the Lyceums of the Greek state.

But this Gymnasium is not the first Lyceum erected in Corytsa. It was transformed into a gymnasium from the middle of the last century in accordance with the educational laws of Greece; it existed, however, since 1724, that is from the time

the cathedral church was erected and Corytsa began to assume the appearance of a city.

This institution discloses something very curious indeed. Those who wanted to stir the waters in Vienna and represent at one time Corytsa as a city where the so-called intellectual life of the Albanians centered, always bring forth Euthymios Mitkos as the leader of the Albanian literature. He did, indeed, collect and edit some stories and some Albanian songs, using the Greek alphabet because there never existed any Albanian.

But he did this, in order that the more vulgar of the Albanians who were ignorant of the Greek, might read these products of the Albanian folk literature. He never believed, however, that an Albanian could receive any education other than Greek. He had received a Greek education himself and considered himself a Greek. Mitkos composed Greek poems, which though they lack literary value and inspiration, they prove, nevertheless, the Greek sentiments of the man. On the left wing of the Greek Gymnasium, there is on the wall an epigram in verse very characteristic of this poet which belies those who impudently speak of Albanian literature, and bears the signature of Mitkos. It reads thus:

> "Truly a large number of students has come out from the school, who have devoted themselves to the sciences or the practical arts and who reflect honor on the Greek kintelligence and diligence."

To the right of the Greek Gymnasium there rises another building, the Mutual Teaching School, established by the benefactors of the city, Demetrios and Anastasios Liatske. Intended for a Mutual Teaching School when that method was in vogue, it operated as such until 1887. Since then, like the rest of the schools, it followed the educational system of the Greek state. This school has operated since 1867 with as many as 440 students. Owing to the fact, however, that it could not take in the constantly increasing number of students, there was another municipal school erected in 1888 with 220 students.

Sixty-five years ago, there was also established in Corytsa the first Greek school for girls. This building was burned down in 1822, but in the same year it was rebuilt even more beautiful at the expense of another benefactor of the city, George Dokos. This brilliant educational institution provides complete education to the girls of Corytsa. It is in this school that the elegant misses of Corytsa are brought up in Greek refinement and culture. It is from this institution they receive their Greek sentiments which are so true and deep that when it was decided Corytsa was to be included in that lifeless state of Prince Wied, they were the first to raise the banner of revolt during which streams of blood flowed in the streets of Cortysa for the regaining of her independence.

But besides the school for girls there are two Greek kindergartens. One of these was built by the Association of Corytsa, the other by a benefac-

tor of the city, Vasilios Tiatsis, in 1873. Both of these are providing education to more than 450 girls.

All these educational institutions are maintained from the income of the Lassos funds. This common educational fund was established in 1850 while Neophytos was archbishop of Corytsa. All the citizens contributed to this fund but mostly, the Corytsean merchants and business men established in Egypt, and later George Bangas, who, while yet in life, devoted his great wealth to philanthropic purposes. This fund is safely deposited in the National Bank of Greece. There are also two large buildings of George Bangas in the Place de la Concord of Athens whose income is used for the same educational purposes for which the Lassos fund is used.

Two thousand three hundred students of both sexes go to those six Greek schools of the city; 76,000 francs are spent annually for the maintenance of these schools, which came as I said, from legacies of wealthy Corytsaeans, who, going to the great commercial centers of the world and there acquiring wealth, never forget their distant fatherland, but always during their life or at their death, they place their wealth at the disposal of the city where they first saw the light of day, for the education of her sons

These schools and those of the villages round about Corytsa make their appearance as early as the seventeenth century and are reported in the codes deposited with the holy archbishopric. Two

centuries before the establishment of the Greek state, Greek culture and the modern Greek civilization was thriving there. If the churches, educational and philanthropic institutions, the development of commerce and of the fine arts characterize the progress and national civilization of a place, this land has proved as few have done, even during the years of slavery as well as today, its Greek conscience and those virtues which are characteristic of the Greek race.

In the towns round about Corytsa, like Emporia, and Moschopolis which was entirely destroyed last year by the robber bands of the Turko-Albanian Saly-Boutka, there are churches built as early as the twelfth century; at Moschopolis alone there were in existence until 1916 twenty-four churches, all Greek; their architectural style and wealth showed the prosperity and greatness of that historic city which was so brutally destroyed under the very eyes of the Germans. Bythokoukon, a town not more than twenty kilometers from Corytsa, is bedecked by fourteen churches, works of the seventeenth century. In the vicinity of Corytsa there were in operation during the Turkish rule and are in operation now one hundred and twenty schools of both sexes with twelve thousand students.

V.

But let us return to Corytsa. The municipal property of that city exceeds in value 3,000,000 francs from whose income there is maintained among other institutions, one hospital and one apothecary, which provides drugs to the poor without cost; dowries also are provided for many poor for worthy girls of the city.

Commerce, on the other hand, is entirely in Greek hands. Perhaps nowhere is the Greek conscience so deeply rooted as it is here. All these justify the terrible uprising of the people of Corytsa in 1914, when it was demanded that she be separated from her motherland Greece and be joined to the ephemeral Albanian state which was the creation of Austrian policy seeking underhandedly to keep that country in constant turmoil.

The patriotism and the Greek character of that district is traditional among the Epirotes and Macedonians. Her inhabitants have never sought to identify their national existence with that of the Albanians. Two examples will suffice to show how jealously they guard their principles. In 1886 the benefactor of this city, Anastosios Liaptsis, offered to the municipality of Corytsa 600,000 francs for the educational institutions maintained by it. He placed, however, one condition, that the Albanian tongue be taught in them two hours a week. The community came together in a General Assembly and refused that large gift. Liatskis hastened in a

touching letter to beg forgiveness from his fellow countrymen and to beseech the community to accept the gift without any conditions. Erakles Douros also offered 100,000 francs for the philanthropic institutions of the city, but in the instrument by which the gift was made he mentioned Christian community and not Greek. The community again gathered together in a general assembly and did not hesitate to reject this gift also. In this manner, the Corytseans showed that they were always Greek by breeding, by character, by blood and by descent and that they continue to be such, inseparably bound to their Greek fatherland. And, indeed, whoever studies that beautiful land from the point of view of language, of national conscience, of history, of traditions, of customs and morals, he sees everywhere a pure Hellenism existing undiminishd for two thousand years and more. All the coins found which date before Christ, all the inscriptions, all the works of art before and after Christ, are as much Greek as the works of Athens or any other Greek land. This Hellenism, nevertheless, did run the danger of being assimilated with foreign elements much inferior to itself in civilization. Great efforts and revolutionary uprising of the inhabitants was required to suspend decisions which violated every principle of justice and truth.

One revolution broke out immediately after the treaty of Florence. In the streets of Corytsa there are still traces of that revolt. The Albanians entered the city on the seventeenth of February, 1914.

Those who saw that ragged mob of deserters from the Turkish army, accompanied by a Dutch officer of Austrian descent, were horrified at the sight. The country was falling anew into another and more shameful yoke. But a month had not elapsed and the city as well as the villages round about, showed that it was impossible to suffer the fate allotted them by the Conference. On the 19th of March, 1914, the city was in full revolutionary orgasm. On the same day Corytsa was divided into two military camps and the battle from hour to hour assumed terrible proportions.

During the three days the battle was carried on in the different sectors of the city, one hundred and fourteen Greeks were killed and more than this number of Wied's Albanians who had gathered together from all sides. This revolution, which was unprepared and broke out suddenly, was apt to be checked. The archbishop and the notables were seized and were taken in chains to Elbasan.

At this instance the Gegs revolted against Wied and freed the archbishop and the leading men of Corytsa. After the European war broke out, the state of Wied was dissolved and Corytsa was occupied again by the Greek army.

Since then the vicissitudes of the city have not ceased. The wretched policy of the deposed King Constantine gave occasion to have Corytsa separated from her natural Greek administration. Since then those wonderful Greek schools which for more than two centuries have shed the light of culture, have ceased to operate temporarily. Corytsa

is in the possession of the French, and has a system of administration which is peculiar indeed, with all the signs of temporariness.

VI

There is no power on earth that can change the Greek character of such a city. Five centuries of slavery failed to do it. One need not make an extended stay in it, to perceive the dominating sentiments of the people. A simple and casual event during my arrival at Corytsa, served as an occasion for a characteristic outburst of the prevailing feeling. The Commander of the Fifth Army corps stationed at Jannina, General Meliotis Comnenos, was kind enough to place at my disposal during my trip in Macedonia, as a companion, a non-commissioned officer of the Euzones—light girded troops. The men of this corps are most beloved of all the Greek soldiers. These are the descendants of the ancient heroes of the Greek mountains. They are agile, brave, impetuous and swift. Moreover, they wear the kilts, the ancient garment of the fighters of the holy struggle. (War of independence, 1821). My companion was one of the most handsome men of this corps. As soon as he appeared in the streets of Corytsa a spontaneous demonstration took place. All ran forward and surrounded him. Flowers were offered him from all sides, and in the evening the youth of the city gave a dinner in his honor. The Corytseans saw in this agile soldier in-

carnated the idea of freedom which the Greek army six years ago amid unbounded enthusiasm brought to the unredeemed people of Macedonia and Epirus from the banks of Ilissos. This liberty was banished for some time by a cruel diplomatic decision made for the purpose of satisfying the secret aims of Austrian policy. This decision was exactly the cause for the flow of much blood in the streets of the city.

On the evening of my arrival I met many Corytseans, most of whom I knew from old. They were students attending the University of Athens, and frequented the political and literary circles of the Greek Capital, not only at the time that Bulgarian Comitadzis were carrying on a savage war to impose themselves by the knife and terror upon the peacable inhabitants of the village towns, but even much earlier. Even at that period as well as during the long period of slavery the inhabitants of Corytsa kept in touch with Athens. Since the liberation of Greece they turned their eyes toward that city longing for a political independence, under the protection of the Greek flag. Thus in the first center I entered I found myself in the midst of acquaintances and friends. Then I recalled the common efforts and struggles of older days. The wars of 1912-13 which were inspired by the political genius of Eleutherios Venizelos, had solved most of the Greek questions which the Turkish conquest four centuries ago had placed on the table for solution. Among them the question of Corytza had been solved. No one could have ever imagined

that this Greek city, the hearth of Greek letters for two centuries, would be included in a state essentially Mussulman; that immediately a new complex question would have been created, and the people who but recently gained their independence would be kept in constant trouble and eternal turmoil.

I passed in Corytza memorable days. Seldom have I felt the national pulse beat stronger. One evening under the light of the moon in a garden outside the city, several friends sat down to a frugal supper. One of them had grown gray in the constant struggle for the Greek "Idea," recalling those years of trouble and danger and looking at the present inconceivable situation, lifted his glass and suddenly recited two verses which were full of heart-breakng melancholy.

"For us fate has decreed that we be ever and ever fighting; ever and ever killed and yet live in slavery."

Our eyes were filled with tears. For a moment those verses seemed to me a strong protest not only against fate, but against human injustice imposed upon a people which by all human rights is entitled to live in this world in accordance with its wishes and national conscience. I thought that as a citizen of free Greece, brought up from childhood with the idea of justice and freedom, I should not accept such a statement as descriptive of the fate of the people of Corytsa.

"No," I cried, "We shall not be always fighting, we shall not be always killed and fate has not pre-determined us for everlasting slavery. At the moment when all the democratic nations are fighting for the freedom of the peoples, the slightest doubt concerning the fate of Corytsa would be a blasphemy against the Greco-Latin civilization."

An old poet of ours in similar circumstances recited some verses which are most suitable to the Greek character.

"We must take courage, for tomorrow shall bring better things."

All of us are awaiting better days for Corytsa. Thus I parted with those patriots whose boiling sentiments are now held by the French flag. So long as that flag waves, it is not permitted to the Corytseans to entertain any doubts about their future national re-establishment.

OBJECTS OF THE UNION.

The Pan-Epirotic Union of America is organized for the purpose of enlightening American public opinion on the national aspirations of the people of Northern Epirus to be united with their mother-country—Greece; and for the purpose of encouraging and assisting the members to adapt themselves to the new conditions of life in their adopted country.